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OUTDOOR RECREATION PARTICIPATION BY ETHNIC GROUPS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

A SUMMARY

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SUMMARY

The ethnic mix of British Columbia is changing. The number of immigrants to British Columbia from Hong Kong, for example, increased over 630 percent from 1986 to 1990 (from 1,207 in 1986 to 7,616 in 1990, Central Statistics Bureau).* While a major goal of BC Parks is to give all British Columbians an opportunity to participate in a variety of outdoor recreation activities within the park system, the extent to which the recreation needs of ethnic groups are being met is not known. Identifying possible differences in recreation participation levels and use of provincial parks between ethnic groups is one of the first steps in determining how well these recreation needs are being met.

In an effort to understand the participation levels and the use of provincial parks by different ethnic groups of British Columbia, two telephone surveys were conducted in May, 1991 by Marktrend, Inc. The first survey was conducted with a sample of 243 adult Lower Mainland residents (i.e. all ethnic groups). The second survey was conducted with a sample of 101 adult Asians and 99 adult East Indians from the Lower Mainland. These latter two ethnic groups were chosen for the second survey because they accounted for a majority of ethnic groups with a non British, French or European ethnic origin.** Following are the key findings from these surveys.

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* For a more detailed discussion of the ethnic background of British Columbians, please refer to a report entitled "The Ethnic Origins of British Columbians" (forthcoming BC Parks, September, 1991)

** In 1986, British Columbians who had British, French, European or similar ethnic origin accounted for about 85 percent of B.C.'s population. Of the remaining 15 percent, Asians (5.5%) and East Indians (2.4%), the two largest groups, accounted for 8 percent of B.C.'s population in 1986. A large majority of Asians (90%) and nearly three-quarters of East Indians (73.6%) lived in the Lower Mainland.

The first telephone survey was conducted with adults throughout B.C. between May 6 and May 16, 1991. About half of those respondents (243 out of 508) lived in Greater Vancouver Regional District. The margin of error for a sample of 243 is about +/- 6.3%.

The second telephone survey was conducted with adults with an Asian and East Indian ethnic origin from the Greater Vancouver Regional District between May 15 and May 22, 1991. Households with Asian and East Indian sounding surnames were selected from the GRVD telephone directory and were screened for the appropriate ethnic background. Telephone interviews were only conducted with respondents who could speak English.The margin of error for a sample of 100 is about +/- 10% and for a sample of 200 it is about +/- 6.9%.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

A key finding is that outdoor recreation tends be more important among all ethnic groups of the Lower Mainland (i.e the general population) than among East Indians and Asians. Slightly more than half (51%) of the Lower Mainland sample (i.e. general population) said outdoor recreation was very important to them while 38% of Lower Mainland residents with an Asian and East Indian ethnic background said it was very important to them. The reasons for this difference are not known, but one important factor may be that some Lower Mainland residents with an Asian an East Indian ethnic origin are recent immigrants to British Columbia (about 22% indicated they had lived in British Columbia less than 5 years). These recent immigrants, in turn, may be less aware of the recreation opportunities in British Columbia and may be spending relatively more time learning a second language and earning a living and thus outdoor recreation may seem less important in comparison to these other interests.

A second key finding is that participation levels in most of the 14 outdoor recreation activities also tended to be higher among the general population than among East Indians and Asians. There were, however, several notable differences from this general pattern. **The most popular activity among all groups was going to the beach** (i.e. there was no significant difference between the general population (82%), Asians (77%) and East Indians (80%)). The popularity of this activity among all groups suggests there may be no cultural or ethnic barriers which inhibit the participation in this activity. **Downhill skiing and fishing** tended to be much more popular among Asians than among East Indians. On the other hand, **outdoor swimming** was much more popular among East Indians than among Asians.

A third key finding is that general attitudes about a camping holiday also tended to be higher among the general population than among Asians and East Indians. When respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement "Camping is the best type of vacation a

family can take", about 33% of the general population strongly agreed with this statement compared to about 22 percent for Asians and East Indians (% combined). Respondents were further asked about their preference for two types of holidays in the next six months (i.e. going to a resort or going to a provincial or national park for camping and other outdoor recreation). Slightly over half of the general population (53%) preferred a holiday in a provincial or national park compared to about 40% of Asians and East Indians who preferred this type of holiday.

BC PARK USE

A fourth key finding is that the number of people who have never used a provincial park was much greater among Asians and East Indians (37% combined) than among the general population (13%). A reason mentioned most frequently among Asians and East Indians for having never used a provincial park or not using one in 1990 was lack of time. The general population, on the other hand, mentioned health problems considerably more often than did Asians and East Indians as reason for never having used a park or not using one in 1990.

The percent of respondents who said they used provincial parks in 1990, however, was very similar between the general population (43%) and Asians and East Indians (combined 37%)*** At the same time, there were some differences in the types of provincial parks used in 1990. **East Indians tended to use provincial campgrounds, wilderness areas and marine parks considerably less the general population, while Asians tended to use wilderness areas much less than the general population.**

OPINIONS ABOUT MANAGEMENT OF BC PARKS

A fifth key finding is that there was no difference between the general population and Asian

*** One factor that may have contributed to a lack of difference between these groups is the difficulty, particularly for new immigrants, of trying to distinguish one kind of park from another kind of park.

and East Indians regarding their satisfaction with the overall management of BC Parks. Nearly three-quarters of both the general population (73%) and the Asians and East Indians ethnic group (combined 74%) were either very or somewhat satisfied with the overall management of BC Parks. There was, however, a difference between these groups in their satisfaction with one of the five job functions of BC Parks. **Asians and East Indians (60%) tended to be less satisfied with the provision of public information about things to do and see in provincial parks than the general population (68%).** The general lack of awareness about BC Parks by Asians and East Indians was further indicated by the low percent of these groups who said they had heard of the ecological reserves program. About 18 percent of Asians and East Indians said they heard of the ecological reserves program compared to 35% for the general population.

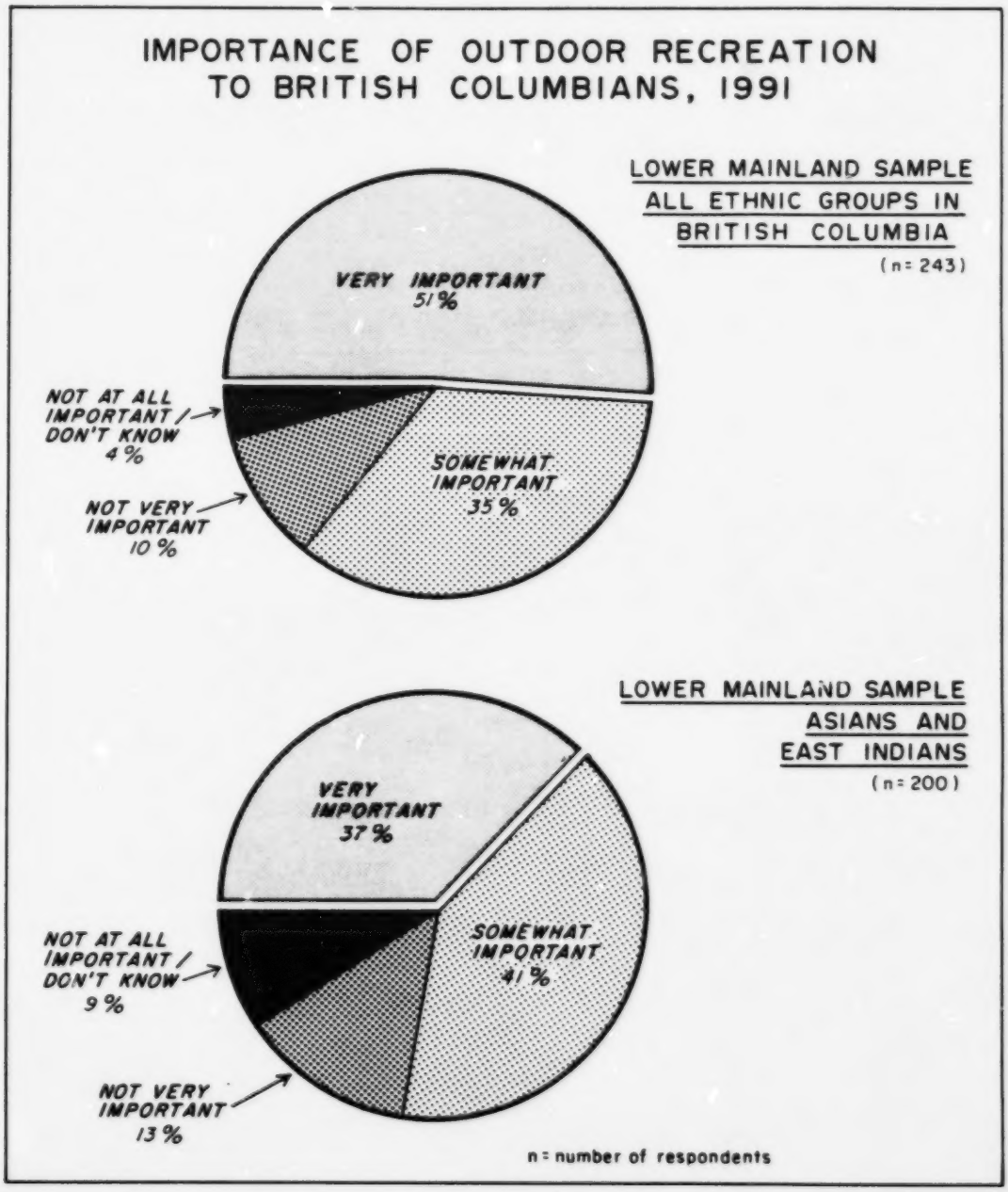
These latter findings suggest that BC Parks should consider alternative ways of improving awareness about provincial parks and ecological reserves among Asians and East Indians. Some possible ways of improving awareness among these groups would be to:

- **prepare a brochure about parks in different ethnic languages;**
- **have park staff give talks at ethnic community club meetings (e.g. slide/talk presentations); and**
- **provide special events for different ethnic groups in provincial parks (e.g. art show, music performance, etc.)**

FINDINGS

1. In 1991, **about 51% of the general B.C. population** said outdoor recreation was very important to them compared to about **37% of Asians and East Indians** who said outdoor recreation was very important to them.

   No significant difference was found between Asians (34%) and East Indians (41%) who said outdoor recreation was very important to them.


IMPORTANCE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION TO BRITISH COLUMBIANS, 1991
LOWER MAINLAND SAMPLE
ALL ETHNIC GROUPS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA
(n = 243)
VERY IMPORTANT 51%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT 35%
NOT VERY IMPORTANT 10%
NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT / DON'T KNOW 4%
LOWER MAINLAND SAMPLE
ASIANS AND EAST INDIANS
(n = 200)
VERY IMPORTANT 37%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT 41%
NOT VERY IMPORTANT 13%
NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT / DON'T KNOW 9%
n = number of respondents

The question was: Generally, how important is outdoor recreation to you as compared to your other interests? Is it... (The response categories are indicated above.)

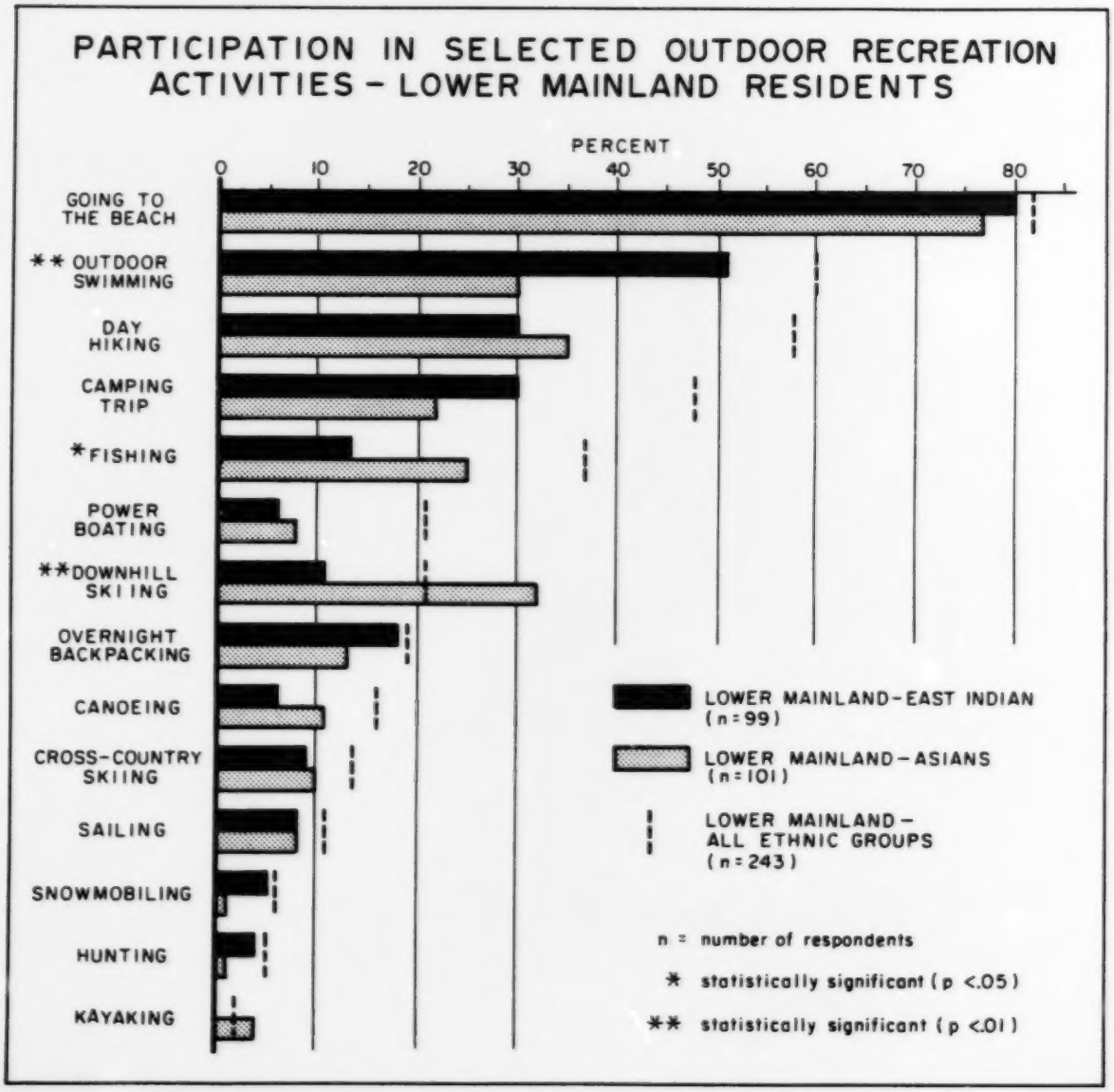
2. For **most outdoor recreation activities**, participation in these activities was usually **higher among the general population** than among Asians and East Indians.

Going to the beach was the most popular activity for the **general population (82%), East Indians (80%) and Asians (77%).**

Outdoor swimming tended to be more popular among **East Indians** (51%) than Asians (30%).

Downhill skiing tended to be more popular among **Asians** (32%) than among the general population (23%) and East Indians (11%).

Fishing also tended to be more popular among **Asians** (25%) than among East Indians (13%).

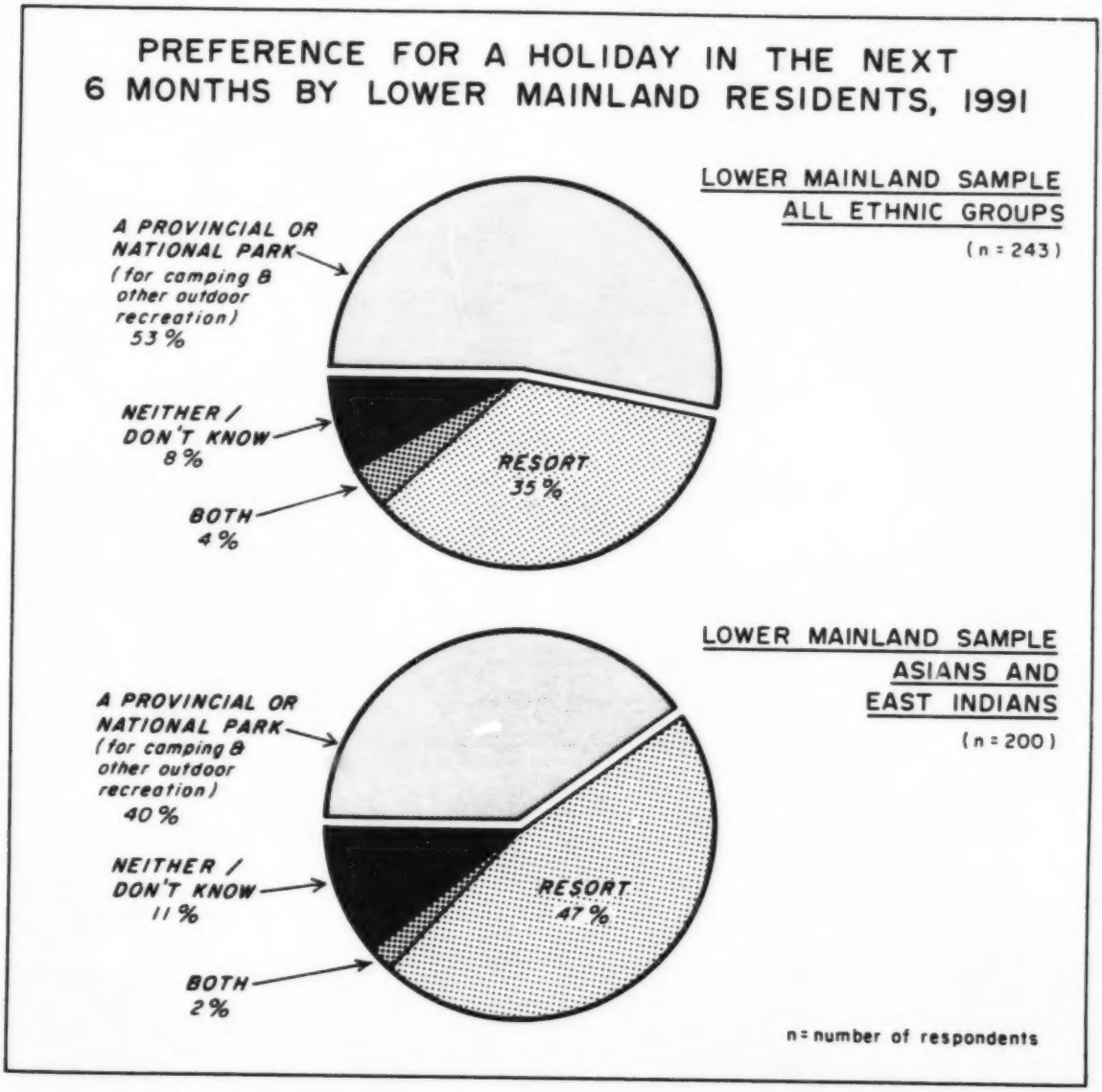


The question was: In the past 12 months, in which of the following types of outdoor recreation activities have you participated?

3. About **33 percent of the general population** strongly agreed with the statement that "camping is the best type of vacation a family can take" compared to **about 22 percent of the Asian and East Indian respondents** who strongly agreed with this statement.

No significant difference was found between Asians (19%) and East Indians (24%) in regard to their strong agreement with this statement.

When asked about their **preference for holiday in the next 6 months, about 53 percent of the general population** preferred a holiday in a provincial or national park for camping and other outdoor recreation compared to about **40 percent of Asians** (39%) **and East Indians** (41%).

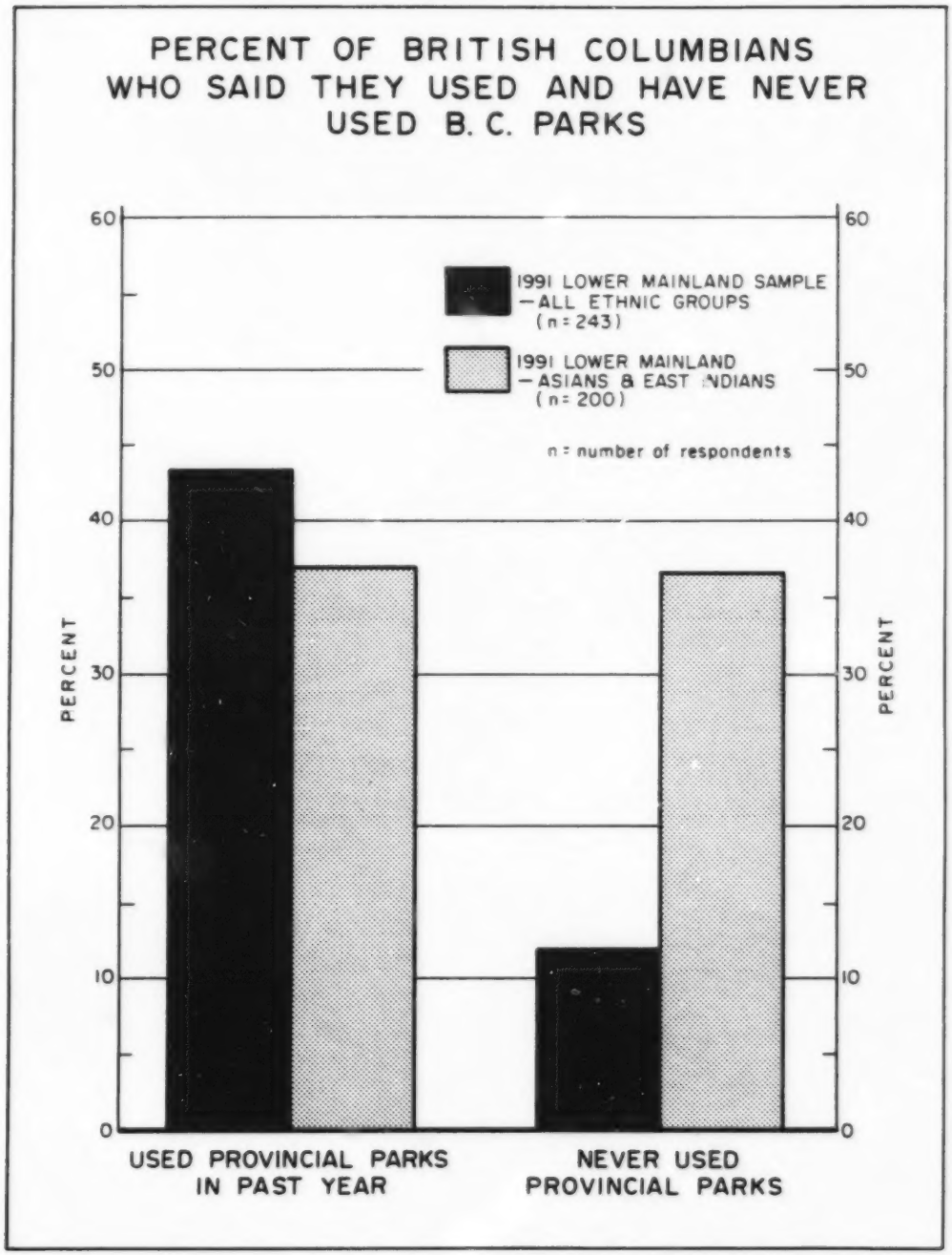

PREFERENCE FOR A HOLIDAY IN THE NEXT 6 MONTHS BY LOWER MAINLAND RESIDENTS, 1991
LOWER MAINLAND SAMPLE
ALL ETHNIC GROUPS
(n = 243)
A PROVINCIAL OR NATIONAL PARK (for camping & other outdoor recreation) 53 %
NEITHER / DON'T KNOW 8 %
BOTH 4 %
RESORT 35 %
LOWER MAINLAND SAMPLE
ASIANS AND EAST INDIANS
(n = 200)
A PROVINCIAL OR NATIONAL PARK (for camping & other outdoor recreation) 40 %
NEITHER / DON'T KNOW 11 %
BOTH 2 %
RESORT 47 %
n = number of respondents

The questions were: I will now read you a statement and I would like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the statement. "Camping is the best type of vacation a family can take", do you strongly agree, mildly agree, mildly disagree or strongly disagree with the statement?

In the next six months, if you had a choice as to the type of vacation you would take, would you prefer to go to a resort or would you prefer to go to a provincial or national park for camping and other outdoor recreation?

4. The number of Asians and East Indians (37%) who used BC Parks in 1990 was similar to the general population (43%) who used BC Parks in 1990.

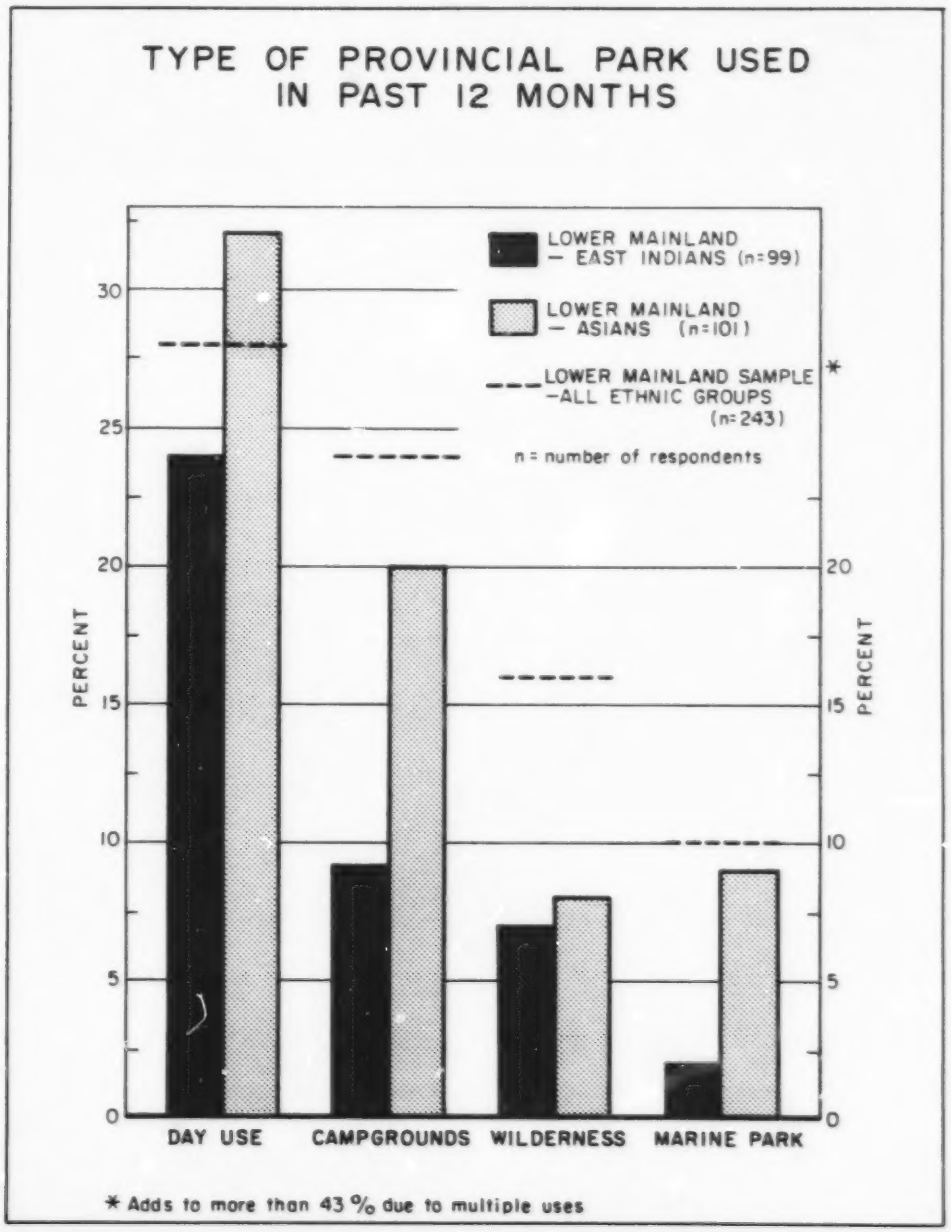
The percent of **Asians and East Indians (37%)** who said they had **never used a provincial park was nearly 3 times the percent of the general population (13%)** who said they had never used provincial parks.


PERCENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS WHO SAID THEY USED AND HAVE NEVER USED B. C. PARKS
1991 LOWER MAINLAND SAMPLE — ALL ETHNIC GROUPS (n = 243)
1991 LOWER MAINLAND — ASIANS & EAST INDIANS (n = 200)
n = number of respondents
PERCENT
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
USED PROVINCIAL PARKS IN PAST YEAR
NEVER USED PROVINCIAL PARKS

5. About **28 percent** of the general population said they used a day use area in 1990. This was followed by **provincial campgrounds (24%), wilderness areas (16%) and marine parks (10%).**

The percent of **Asians who used campgrounds (20%)** was more than twice as high as the percent of **East Indians (9%)** who used campgrounds.

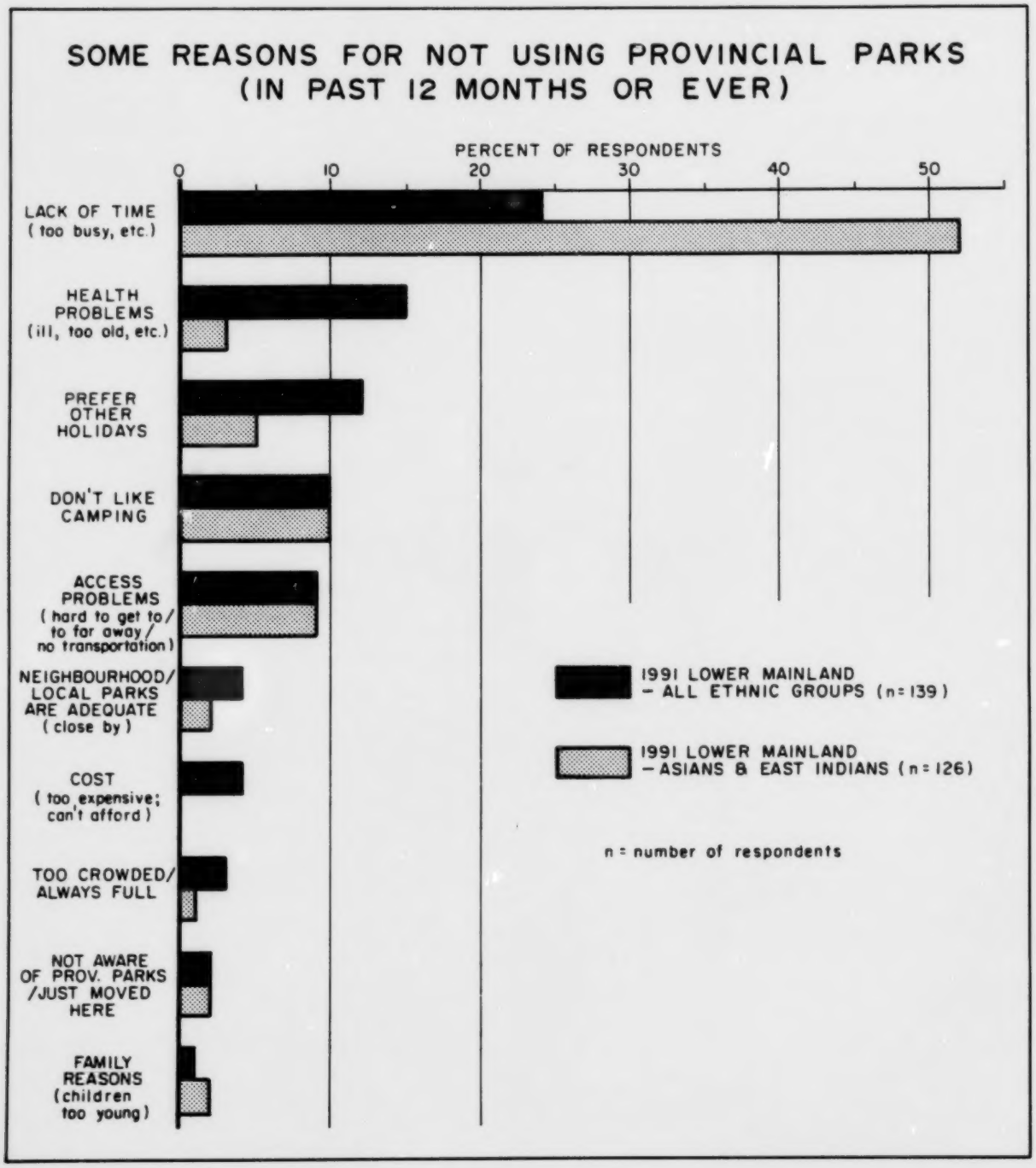
The percent of **Asians who used marine parks (9%)** was more than 4 times higher than the percent of **East Indians** who used marine parks **(2%).**



The questions were: And now I'd like to ask you a few questions about provincial parks, that is, those parks which are run by the provincial government, not neighbourhood, city, regional or national parks. Have you ever used a provincial park? Did you use a provincial park in the past 12 months or not? And in the past 12 months, which type of provincial park did you use most often? And which other types of provincial parks did you use in the last year? Any others?

6. A primary reason **Asian and East Indians have never or did not use a provincial park in 1990 was lack of time** (or being too busy).

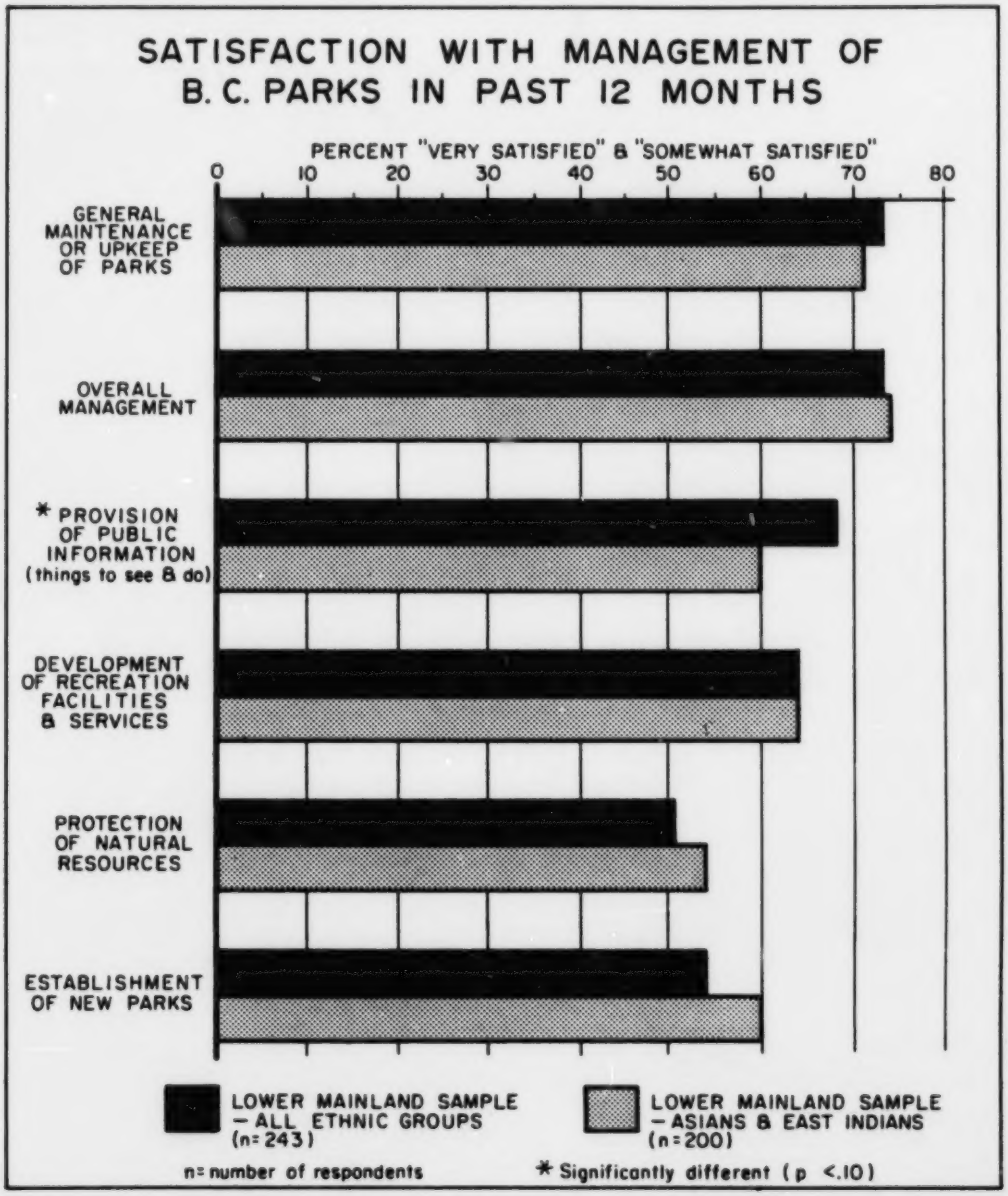
While **lack of time** was also cited most frequently by the general population for not using parks in 1990 or ever, other frequently mentioned reasons were **health problems** (ill, too old, etc.) and **preference for other types of holidays**.


SOME REASONS FOR NOT USING PROVINCIAL PARKS
(IN PAST 12 MONTHS OR EVER)
PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS
0
10
20
30
40
50
LACK OF TIME (too busy, etc.)
HEALTH PROBLEMS (ill, too old, etc.)
PREFER OTHER HOLIDAYS
DON'T LIKE CAMPING
ACCESS PROBLEMS (hard to get to/ to far away/ no transportation)
NEIGHBOURHOOD/ LOCAL PARKS ARE ADEQUATE (close by)
COST (too expensive; can't afford)
TOO CROWDED/ ALWAYS FULL
NOT AWARE OF PROV. PARKS /JUST MOVED HERE
FAMILY REASONS (children too young)
1991 LOWER MAINLAND – ALL ETHNIC GROUPS (n=139)
1991 LOWER MAINLAND – ASIANS & EAST INDIANS (n=126)
n = number of respondents

The questions were: What is the main reason you have never used a provincial park? And what is the main reason you have not used a provincial park in the past 12 months?

7. **Nearly three quarters** of the general population (73%), Asians (74%) and East Indians (73%) were either **very or somewhat satisfied with the overall management of BC Parks** in the past 12 months.

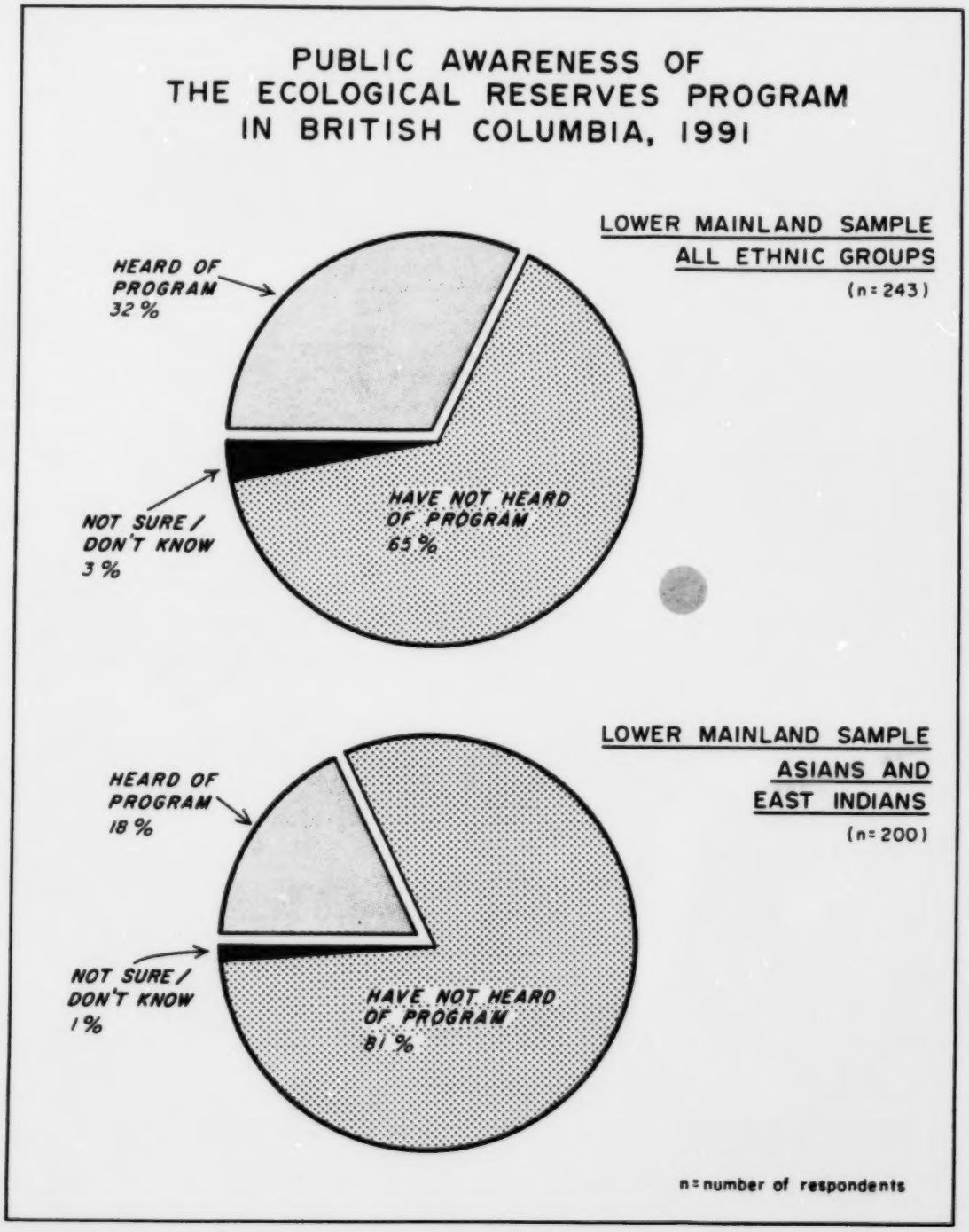
The **general population** tended to be more satisfied with the **provision of public information** (**68%** said very or somewhat satisfied) than did **Asians and East Indians** (**60%** said very or somewhat satisfied).


SATISFACTION WITH MANAGEMENT OF B. C. PARKS IN PAST 12 MONTHS
PERCENT "VERY SATISFIED" & "SOMEWHAT SATISFIED"
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
GENERAL MAINTENANCE OR UPKEEP OF PARKS
OVERALL MANAGEMENT
* PROVISION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION (things to see & do)
DEVELOPMENT OF RECREATION FACILITIES & SERVICES
PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES
ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PARKS
LOWER MAINLAND SAMPLE - ALL ETHNIC GROUPS (n=243)
LOWER MAINLAND SAMPLE - ASIANS & EAST INDIANS (n=200)
n= number of respondents
* Significantly different (p <.10)

The questions were: Next I'm going to read five jobs of the Ministry of Parks, that is, the provincial government agency who is responsible for running provincial parks, not national, regional, city or neighbourhood parks. As I mention each of these jobs, I would like you to tell me if you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the job that has been done over the past 12 months?

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way provincial parks have been managed in the past 12 months? Would you say you are...very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied... with the way provincial parks have been managed in the past 12 months?

8. The percent of the **general population** who indicated they had heard of the **ecological reserves program (32%)** was nearly twice as high as the percent of **Asians and East Indians (18%)** who said they had heard of this program.


PUBLIC AWARENESS OF
THE ECOLOGICAL RESERVES PROGRAM
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1991
LOWER MAINLAND SAMPLE
ALL ETHNIC GROUPS
(n=243)
HEARD OF PROGRAM 32 %
HAVE NOT HEARD OF PROGRAM 65 %
NOT SURE / DON'T KNOW 3 %
LOWER MAINLAND SAMPLE
ASIANS AND EAST INDIANS
(n=200)
HEARD OF PROGRAM 18 %
HAVE NOT HEARD OF PROGRAM 81 %
NOT SURE / DON'T KNOW 1 %
n = number of respondents

The question was: Have you heard or not heard of the ecological reserves program in British Columbia?